

ARTISTS AND WRITERS PROGRAM

The National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Antarctic Artists and Writers Program makes it possible for the humanities (painting, photography, writing, and history) to be part of the U.S. Antarctic Program. Artists and writers work at U.S. stations and camps, often with science groups but sometimes on their own, to create works that portray the region or the activities that take place there.



Mary Miller, right, answers questions from museum patrons in San Francisco as Julie Kanop films a live webcast at McMurdo Station. Both women were participants in the Artists and Writers program, sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

NSF photo by Melanie Conner

The Antarctic Artists and Writers Program contributes to NSF's goal of advancing discovery while disseminating results broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding. The program helps record the Nation's antarctic heritage, responding to White House direction that the U.S. Antarctic Program support the range of U.S. interests in the region. Application procedures and a list of past participants can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/aawr.htm>.

The selection process for the Artists and Writers Program is comparable to the one for science projects in that a peer-review panel meets at NSF annually to evaluate the applications; this panel's advice heavily influences NSF's selections. The applicants who are chosen receive field support (including air travel from the United States), but no direct NSF funds. The program, while intended mainly for U.S. citizens, considers requests from artists and writers who live in other Antarctic Treaty nations but whose applications demonstrate that their works will reach a significant U.S. audience. The next application deadline, for participation in the 2005–2006 austral summer season, will be early June 2004.

Palmer Station children's novel.

Lucy Bledsoe.

Ms. Bledsoe is planning to write a novel for children in the middle grades. It would depict the contemporary adventure of scientific exploration taking place at and from Palmer Station. She will interview and observe the daily work of scientists working from the Station and will accompany them into the field and out on zodiacs. Because her readers will be particularly interested in wildlife, she will work especially closely with biologists and also plans to observe scientists working on a research vessel to broaden the scope of the novel or to gather data for a separate novel. In addition, she will camp on Torgersen Island and at Old Palmer. (W-218-P)

Ice through the Ages: A nonfiction young adult book.

Jennifer Armstrong.

Ms. Armstrong is writing a book about ice. To do her research, she plans to visit, by fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter, sites where work on and in ice is taking place. She also plans to use a field camp kit to make occasional visits to remote camps. (W-219-M)

Soil biodiversity book.

Yvonne Baskin.

Ms. Baskin plans to gather material for a book on global soil biodiversity by working closely with the members of project B-420-M and by taking mostly day trips out of McMurdo Station. She plans to spend approximately 3 to 4 weeks in January and February 2004 observing and working at field sites with soil ecologists and other researchers from the McMurdo Dry Valleys Long-Term Ecological Research Program. She also intends to accompany researchers on a sampling trip to Battleship Promontory and observe sample processing in Cray Laboratory. (W-220-M)

History of science in Antarctica.

Edward Larson.

Dr. Larson, a science historian, plans to prepare a book and articles geared to a broad audience on the history of scientific research in Antarctica. His research will primarily involve inspecting libraries and archives at McMurdo Station, interviewing scientists and observing them at work, and experiencing the places where they work, including South Pole Station. He also plans day trips to historically important research sites, such as the dry valleys and the ice shelf, and to research vessels. Further, he plans to accompany or visit scientists working in the field, particularly at sites where research on the environment is taking place. Because the book will begin with the Wilkes Expedition, which marks the launching of antarctic research funded by the U.S. government, he hopes to visit the Wilkes Land coast. (W-221-M)

The Fallen Sky: Eccentrics and Scientists in Pursuit of Shooting Stars: Field work with Antarctic Search for Meteorites main party and reconnaissance team, under the supervision of Dr. Ralph Harvey, ANSMET PI, 2003-2004.

Christopher Cokinos.

During the 2003-2004 field season, Mr. Cokinos will be traveling as a regular member of the Antarctic Search for Meteorites (ANSMET) main party and reconnaissance team in order to write a concluding section for a nonfiction book on meteorites and the stories behind those who study them. He therefore plans to experience ANSMET operations and field conditions and to record activities, impressions, descriptions, and quotes. He will use the data he gathers as a basis for two or three chapters on the search for meteorites in Antarctica, relating that search to what they tell us about the origins of the solar system, the flux of meteorite falls over time, allegations of biological activity recorded in meteorites, and the chemistry of organic materials contained in them.

He intends to spend approximately 3 weeks in the field with the main search team and another 3 weeks with the reconnaissance team. Quick 1-day tours of sites of historic importance to meteorites (the Allan Hills main icefield, the Allan Hills west icefield, and the Elephant Moraine) are also slated. (W-223-M)

Field Guide to Antarctic Features: McMurdo Sound Region.

Lawrence Conrad.

From 15 September 2003 until 20 February 2004, Mr. Conrad intends to photograph about 1,000 named features from a total of about 2,000 views to use in a geographically arranged, historical gazetteer of the McMurdo region. The area to be covered consists of Ross Island to the seaward edge of the polar plateau, Nordenskjöld Ice Tongue to the Koettlitz Névé. (W-224-M)